REMARKS

Entry of the amendment proposed above, and reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections and objections in light of such amendment and the following remarks, is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-3, 11-21, and 23-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,160,631 (Okimoto et al.) Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite a local computer having at least one document stored thereon, with the document being associated with at least one native data format. A remote computer is associated with a remote printer and receives a print request associated with the document from the local computer, causing the remote printer to print the document while maintaining the associated native data format. Okimoto et al. does not disclose or suggest this arrangement. Okimoto et al. utilizes an email message header to convey printing information in a predetermined format, i.e., "the process in S120 is immediately executed to convert the document data, designated by the application program for printing, into print data of a predetermined format. In this example, the document data is converted into print data which is described by a predetermined page description language (emulation) capable of being interpreted by the printer 6." Okimoto et al, therefore, uses a document format emulation process which does not necessarily maintain the native data format of the document when it is printed remotely. Claim 1 is therefore believed to patentably distinguish over the cited reference. Claims 2-3, dependent upon Claim 1, are also believed to be allowable by virtue of Claim 1 being allowable.

Independent Claim 11 has been amended to recite the steps of receiving from a source computer a request to print a document, accepting a printer polling signal from a destination computer, responding to the polling signal by sending the print request to the destination computer for printing on a printer, receiving a print result signal from the destination computer and sending the print result signal to the source computer. Okimoto et al. does not disclose or suggest the method as recited in Claim 11. Okimoto et al. does not disclose or suggest the steps of sending a print request signal to a destination computer in response to a printer polling signal. Okimoto et al. merely discloses the process of sending mail messages to a remote computer which does not know the contents or type of message that will be received. Okimoto et al. only discloses that a remote computer looks for mail messages and then deals with them when they arrive, unlike the arrangement of Claim 11 which send a specific print request to a destination computer in response to a signal that indicates a printer is ready or available for printing. Claim 11 is therefore believed to be patentable over the cited reference. Claims 12-15, dependent upon Claim 11 are also believed to be allowable by virtue of Claim 11 being allowable.

Independent Claim 16 has been amended to recited the steps of receiving a request to print a document from a source computer, detecting a printer-enabled signal associated with a remote printer, and sending the print request to the remote printer. Okimoto et al. does not disclose or suggest this arrangement. As described above with respect to Claim 11, the remote computer and/or printer of Okimoto et al. does not provide a printer-enabled or "printer ready" signal. The system of Okimoto et al. merely receives email messages as they arrive and thereafter deals with them based on the content and type of message received. The

message sending computer of Okimoto et al. has no way to determine when a print message is sent whether or not the destination computer has an associated printer or if such printer is available or capable of printing the desired documents. Claim 16 is therefore believed to be patentable over the cited reference. Claims 17-27, dependent upon Claim 16 are also believed to be allowable by virtue of Claim 16 being allowable.

Claims 4-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okimoto et al. in view of U.S. 5,287,194 (Lobiondo) Independent Claim 4 has been amended to recite that a network maintains a list of at least one local and at least one remote printer. A local computer, in response to a document print request, first detects if a local printer from the list is available, and if not, then detects whether a remote printer from the list is available. Neither Okimoto et al. nor Lobiondo discloses or suggests such an arrangement. As described above, Okimoto et al. does not disclose or suggest that the presence or availability of a printer is determined before an email is sent to a destination computer to have a document printed. Lobiondo does not disclose or suggest the hierarchical manner in which local versus remote printers are chosen. Lobiondo is directed to printing large or complex documents as efficiently as possible, which may require distributing a single document over a number of different printers. Claim 4 is not directed to a system of this type. Claim 4 is therefore believed to patentably distinguish over the cited references. Claims 5-10, dependent upon Claim 4, are also believed to be allowable by virtue of Claim 4 being believed allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references disclose or make obvious the claimed invention. Accordingly, all of the claims being believed to be allowable, reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully

requested with a passage of this application to allowance respectfully solicited. The Examiner

is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are any questions about this

submission or other matters, which may be addressed in that fashion.

Respectfully submitted,

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